

Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated February 15, 2005. Prior to entry of this amendment, claims 1-18 remained pending in the application.

Applicants initially note, with appreciation, that the Examiner has indicated that claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner. As rewritten, claim 9 thus includes all of the features of the base claim (claim 1) and of all intervening claims (claims 8 and 6). Claim 9 thus is understood to be in allowable form.

Claims 1-4, 6-8 and 12-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,894,318 to Endo ("Endo"). Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japan Patent No. JP06-11980a to Kikuchi ("Kikuchi"). Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Fukushima.

By this amendment, claims 1, 2, 4-10, 13 and 14 have been amended. Claims 15 and 18 have been canceled without prejudice.

Rejection of claims 1-4, 6-8 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Endo

As noted above, claims 1-4, 6-8 and 12-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based upon Endo. Applicants first address rejection of the method claims (claims 1-4, 6-8 and 12). Rejection of the apparatus claims (claims 13-18) follows in a separate section.

Endo discloses an image forming device having an operation panel "for selecting one of printing mode and lamination mode" (See, Abstract; col. 2: lines 53-56). Mode setting is accomplished by manually operating a "panel switch 1e of the

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operation panel 1c." (col. 9: lines 26-27) Endo thus considers only user-selection of an operating mode. There is no further refinement of operation based on the composite media to be processed.

As amended, claim 1 recites:

*A method of using a printing device having a toner fuser to laminate a composite media including media sheet with at least one laminate material sheet, the method comprising:
receiving a laminate request;
identifying the composite media;
adjusting a characteristic of the toner fuser of the printing device based on the identified composite media; and
passing the composite media through the toner fuser to effect lamination within the printing device.*

As indicated above, Endo does not disclose, or even suggest, identification of the composite media which is processed. Accordingly, there is no "adjusting a characteristic of the toner fuser of the printing device based on the identified composite media," as recited in amended claim 1. Claim 1 thus is allowable over Endo, and the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Endo must be withdrawn. Claims 2-4, 6-8 and 12 depend from claim 1, and thus are allowable over Endo for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Rejection of claims 13-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Endo

Claims 13-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based upon Endo for the same reasons as the Examiner noted for claims 1-4, 6-8 and 12. Applicants address claims 13-18 separately because they recite an apparatus, while claims 1-4, 6-8 and 12 describe a method.

As noted, Endo describes an image forming device having an operation panel for selecting one of printing mode and lamination mode. Upon selection of the laminating mode, Endo describes disabling the image-transfer mechanism to prevent inadvertent transfer of toner to the laminate media. Endo notes that "contamination of the lamination sheet members 102, 104 with the residual toner can be avoided by a process shown in the timing chart of Fig. 8" (See, column 12, lines 8-11). Endo does not disclose or suggest bypass of the image-transfer mechanism.

As amended, claim 13 recites:

A printing device comprising:
a media-transport path having at least one media input and at least one media output, wherein the media-transport path includes a selectively operable bypass of the image-transfer mechanism;
an image-transfer mechanism positioned along the media-transport path; and
a fuser system positioned along the media-transport path, downstream of the image-transfer mechanism, and configured with at least one adjustable fusing characteristic to selectively alternatively effect either fusing of toner to a printable media sheet, or lamination of the printable media sheet to a laminate material sheet passed through the fuser system with the printable media sheet.

As amended, claim 13 recites a selectively operable bypass of the image-transfer mechanism. Endo does not disclose a printing device with a selectively operable bypass of the image-transfer mechanism, as disclosed in amended claim 13. Claim 13 thus is allowable over Endo, and the rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Endo must be withdrawn. Claims 14, 16 and 17 depend from claim 13, and thus are allowable over Endo for at least the same reasons as claim 13. Claims 15 and 18 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Rejection of claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Kikuchi

Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kikuchi. Kikuchi discloses a sheet material pressing device and laminate device, wherein thickness of an object to be laminated is detected and the contact pressure is adjusted based on such detected thickness. Kikuchi, however, does not identify the laminate material sheets, or the composite media. Accordingly, Kikuchi does not "[adjust] a characteristic of the toner fuser of the printing device based on the identified composite media" as recited in amended claim 1. In fact, Kikuchi is not a printing device, and thus does not even include a toner fuser as recited in claim 1. Furthermore, Kikuchi does not disclose receiving a laminate request. Kikuchi only specifies receipt of thickness information regarding material inserted into the lamination device. Claim 1 thus is allowable over Kikuchi, and the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Kikuchi must be withdrawn.

Claim 5, which is now in independent form, recites a method of using a printing device having a toner fuser to laminate a media sheet with at least one laminate material sheet. The method includes receiving a laminate request, adjusting the pressure exerted by the toner fuser on the media sheet and the at least one laminate material sheet during passage through the toner fuser, and passing the media sheet and at least one laminate sheet through the toner fuser to effect lamination. As noted, Kikuchi does not disclose receiving a laminate request, and does not disclose adjusting a toner fuser. In fact, Kikuchi does not even disclose a printing device having a toner fuser. Accordingly, claim 5 thus is allowable over Kikuchi, and the rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Kikuchi must be withdrawn.

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Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Endo in view of Fukushima

Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Fukushima. Claim 10 has been amended to independent form. As amended, claim 10 recites:

A method of using a printing device having a toner fuser to laminate a media sheet with at least one laminate material sheet, the method comprising:

- receiving a laminate request;
- displaying instructions on a device display, the instructions defining how to configure the printing device to effect lamination;
- configuring a characteristic of the toner fuser of the printing device; and
- passing the media sheet and the at least one laminate material sheet through the toner fuser to effect lamination within the printing device.

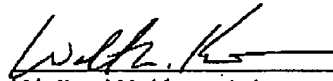
The Examiner proposes combining the teachings of Endo with the teachings of Fukushima in order to achieve manual feed instructions on the device display. However, as Endo does not disclose a user-configurable lamination mode, there is no teaching or suggestion to provide a display with instructions regarding how to configure the lamination mode. Accordingly, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the references as the Examiner proposes. Furthermore, even if the combination were made, the resulting method would merely provide for adjustments due to non-standard media length and width, characteristics which would not impact lamination configuration as recited in amended claim 10. Claim 10 thus is allowable over Endo and Fukushima, and the rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Endo and Fukushima should be withdrawn. Claim 11 depends from claim 10, and thus is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 10.

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Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

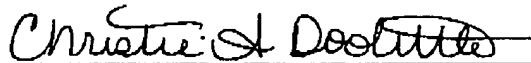
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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner Q. Grainger, Group Art Unit 2852, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (703) 872-9306 on May 10, 2005.



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